



Commonwealth of Kentucky  
Energy and Environment Cabinet  
Department for Natural Resources

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Kentucky Mine Safety Officials Cite Letcher County Man for Illegal Mining Activities

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 28, 2014)** – Investigators of the Kentucky Division of Mine Safety and the Division of Mine Reclamation and Enforcement today cited a Letcher County man for illegally mining an estimated 700 tons of coal at a surface mine near Van in Letcher County. Bryan Lee Wagner of Red Fox was heading up the operation and is charged with mining without a permit and mining without a license.

"Illegal mining operations not only deprive the Commonwealth of revenue generated through coal severance tax dollars but, more importantly, put workers at that mine at risk and leave the surface mining sites unreclaimed," said Department for Natural Resources Commissioner Steve Hohmann. "When an operation such as this is mining coal, our mine safety inspectors and reclamation enforcement people don't have the opportunity to make sure safety procedures and reclamation efforts are in place and being followed."

In the notice of violation, Wagner is directed to "immediately cease mining operations, begin reclamation activities to conform to Permanent Program Standards, immediately install temporary sediment control to Permanent Program Standards, and submit a comprehensive Permanent Program Application."

The civil penalty for illegal mining under surface mining reclamation regulations is from \$5,000 up to \$25,000 per day. The final amount is still being calculated. Under mine safety regulations, Wagner can be barred from obtaining a future license as well as revocation of any

mining certificates or licenses he currently holds. Any non-certified personnel working at the site could also be fined the equivalent of their wages for up to 10 days.

Kentucky surface and underground mines extracted nearly 81 million tons of coal in 2013.

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